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Letter dated 24 February 2017 from the Chargés d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Missions of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

We have the honour to forward to you the concept paper on the joint group agreed upon as the outcome of the international meeting on Syria, held in Astana on 16 February 2017 (see annex).

We should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Eshagh **Al Habib**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
of the Islamic Republic of Iran

(*Signed*) Petr **Iliichev**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
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(*Signed*) Güven **Begeç**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
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Annex to the letter dated 24 February 2017 from the Chargés d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Missions of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Concept paper on the joint group agreed upon as the outcome of the international meeting on Syria held in Astana on 16 February 2017

The Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey (hereinafter the Parties), pursuant to the joint statement on the international meeting on Syria held in Astana on 23 and 24 January 2017, decided to establish the joint group as part of a trilateral mechanism to observe and ensure full compliance with the ceasefire regime in the Syrian Arab Republic; prevent provocations; determine all modalities of the ceasefire, including separating the terrorist groups Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh) and the Nusrah Front from the armed opposition groups in order to consolidate the ceasefire regime; strengthen confidence-building measures; and discuss other related issues that could contribute to the United Nations-sponsored intra-Syrian negotiations on a political solution based on Security Council resolution 2254 (2015).

The group is composed of the representatives of the Parties and the United Nations experts, the number of which is defined by the Parties, in order to effectively search for solutions to the issues under consideration. The United Nations experts will be invited by the Parties to provide a liaison function and expert technical support to the work of the group.

The group will hold regular meetings upon request of one of the Parties and with unanimous approval as to the date and venue. At their meetings, the Parties may propose the dates and venues of upcoming meetings.

During the meetings, the following issues are to be discussed:

- Progress in the implementation of the ceasefire regime declared in Syria on 30 December 2016.
- Investigation of violations with the aim to determine those responsible and take measures to prevent further violations and reduce tensions. Information on violations is provided by the Parties with the assistance of their national ceasefire centres and the United Nations Operations Centre in Geneva. The Parties and the United Nations will regularly exchange information on ceasefire regime violations between meetings.
- Efforts to organize the release of detainees and abductees, as well as the exchange of prisoners and bodies, on a mutually accepted basis, to identify missing persons of the parties to the ceasefire arrangement and to facilitate unhindered and sustainable humanitarian access and the free movement of civilians.

Representatives of the Syrian parties having signed the ceasefire arrangement, and of other countries and organizations that have influence on them, could be invited, subject to consensus of the Parties, to attend the meetings of the joint group, in order to help find effective solutions to the issues under discussion.

The Parties shall brief the International Syria Support Group, through their delegations, on the progress made and the results of their work.

The first meeting of the joint group was held on 6 February 2017.